TRIBAL CONSULTATION EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS BUILDING AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
October 7, 2014

FIRST THINGS FIRST
Ready for School. Set for Life.

2014 Tribal Consultation Report

Pursuant to the First Things First (FTF) Tribal Consultation Policy and Arizona Executive Order 2006-14, Consultation and Cooperation with Arizona Tribes, FTF convened a formal consultation session on Tuesday, October 7, 2014 in Phoenix, Arizona. The focus of the consultation centered on effective early childhood system building in tribal communities and enhancing public-private partnerships to provide support for those early childhood systems.

First Things First is committed to meaningful consultation with tribes through which elected officials and other authorized representatives of the tribal governments have the opportunity to provide meaningful and timely input regarding the development of policies or procedures that affect Arizona's tribes and Native American children and families.

The following summary reflects comments and questions raised by Arizona's tribal leaders and their representatives/designees.

Participants

Tribal Leaders and Tribal Representatives:

1. Thomas Beauty, Chairman, Yavapai-Apache Nation
2. Hilda Cooney, Councilwoman, Hualapai Tribe
3. Amelia Flores, Tribal Council Secretary, Colorado River Indian Tribes
4. Shan Lewis, Vice Chairman, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
5. Roland Manakaja, Vice Chairman, Havasupai Tribe
6. Louis Manuel Jr., Chairman, Ak-Chin Indian Community
7. Wavelene Romero, Vice Chairwoman, Tohono O'odham Nation
8. Michael Brown, Tribal Designee, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and Lead Teacher at the H'man 'Shawa Early Childhood Development Center

First Thing First:
Janice Decker, Board Chair; Vivian Saunders, Board member; Sam Leyvas, Chief Executive Officer; Karen Woodhouse, Chief Program Officer; Michelle Katona, Chief Regional Officer; and, Candida Hunter, Senior Director of Tribal Affairs

In addition to tribal leaders and their designees and First Things First representatives, attendees at the tribal consultation included representatives from the Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona (formerly Inter Tribal Council of Arizona), Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, Native Health and the University of Arizona.

Summary

Although all of the tribal leaders addressed the consultation topics with regard to their specific communities, the discussion presented some common themes around early childhood systems building. During this session, many tribal leaders described the positive relationships their tribes have with First Things First and the resulting impact to young children, but also expressed a desire to have more information about FTF-funded programs and

activities in their communities. Another theme that arose was the general need for additional resources and coordination in order to expand early childhood systems in tribal communities.

Regarding FTF's Private-Public Partnership plan, tribal leaders suggested potentially engaging in conversations and collaborative efforts with tribal/non-tribal entities such as the Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona, various health care providers and external organizations interested in providing services to young children and their families on tribal lands. Several tribal leaders also suggested methods for approaching the work described in the Public-Private Partnership plan.

Tribal leaders concluded the consultation session with recommendations that First Things First continue its efforts in supporting the development of early childhood systems in tribal communities. They also emphasized the need to honor tribal sovereignty, native language and traditional cultural values in any efforts to expand public-private partnerships.

The following are some specific notes emphasized through dialogue with participating tribes.

Comments/Questions/Concerns/Recommendations on Early Childhood System Building

- Many tribal leaders expressed the importance of preserving native language and traditional cultural values within their tribal communities, stressing that strong cultural connections and identity play a role in improved outcomes for children.

- Many tribal leaders were in agreement that the increased use of illegal drugs and alcoholism and its connection with domestic violence can pose challenges in working with families in tribal communities.

- Tribal leaders and/or representative(s) from Havasupai, Colorado River Indian and Hualapai tribes mentioned the shortages of teachers for schools on tribal lands. Also, Colorado River Indian Tribes Tribal Secretary Amelia Flores discussed the tribes' shortages of specialists trained to assist young children with special needs.

- Havasupai Tribe Vice-Chairman Roland Manakaja expressed significant concerns regarding insufficient dental and health care services for tribal members, including young children, in his community due to the isolated location of their tribal lands.

- With regard to methods utilized to approach these challenges, tribal leaders from the Havasupai Tribe and Ak-Chin Indian Community shared their approaches for meeting with official representatives in Washington, D.C. to address their lack of tribal funds and lobby for early childhood development and affordable health care on behalf of the children and their families in their communities.

- Yavapai-Apache Nation Chairman Thomas Beauty mentioned his nation's efforts to develop a native language curriculum; the recruitment of native language speakers to assist in implementing the language program; collaborating with nearby schools for their assistance initiating language classes for tribal and non-tribal members; and, utilization of technology devices to record and store the language data.

- Hualapai Tribe Councilwoman Hilda Cooney conveyed the Tribe's support of the collaboration efforts between First Things First and the Tribe's cultural department in their development of Hualapai Language books and associated compact discs.

- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Representative Michael Brown said one of his community's priorities is to identify the developmental needs of young children and find the essential support, funding and resources for those children and families.

- Ak-Chin Indian Community Chairman Louis Manuel Jr. said his community is prioritizing facility expansion for programs involving young children and their families as well as locating providers to increase services to children with special needs and their families.

- Tohono O'odham Nation Vice-Chairwoman Wavelene Romero said her community has prioritized professional development for school teachers/staff and collaborating with nearby universities on potential programs.

- Colorado River Indian Tribes Tribal Council Secretary Amelia Flores discussed the tribes' major focus on collaborating with tribal programs/services for women, infants and toddlers in the community, and increased coordination with court systems and parent awareness for young parents.

- Tribal leaders were in agreement and advised FTF to find valuable methods to obtain more funding for early childhood programs in tribal communities and recommended proceeding to pursue collaborations with external organizations, state/federal agencies and tribes.

- A recommendation was made by several tribal leaders that existing or expanded programs should account for training on cultural awareness and responsiveness.

- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Representative Michael Brown suggested First Things First align its standards and guidelines with those of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

Comments/Question/Concerns/Recommendations on Private-Public Partnership Plan

- Colorado River Indian Tribes Tribal Council Secretary Amelia Flores said clarification and background is helpful in order for tribes to fully understand the entire context of the plan and the specific intentions of First Things First.

- Yavapai-Apache Nation Chairman Thomas Beauty emphasized the need for FTF staff to visit partnering tribes as a means to further strengthen partnerships with tribes. He asked that the funds dedicated to tribes within the FTF regions, especially for smaller tribes, be increased. He also suggested fundraising events to raise funds to support the Private-Public Partnership plan.

- Tribal Leaders from Fort Mojave Indian Tribe and Yavapai-Apache Nation recommended that FTF partner with the Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona and utilize their strong connections with Arizona tribes to update tribes of potential FTF public-private partnership events and activities.

- Fort Mojave Indian Tribe Vice-Chairman Shan Lewis mentioned the importance of continuous collaboration efforts between FTF regional staff and tribal department directors in hosting educational conferences to introduce external organizations like Healthy Families and Building Bright Futures.

- Ak-Chin Indian Community Chairman Louis Manuel Jr. endorsed the idea of conducting fundraising events as a means to raise funds to support the Private-Public Partnership plan and suggested a percentage of proceeds should be set aside precisely for early childhood development programs in tribal communities.

A full transcript of this event will be available on the tribal consultation page of the FTF website (azftf.gov/tribalconsultation) in the coming weeks.